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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
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| 09/461,738 | 12/16/1999 | HIROOMI MOTOHASHI | 0557-4875-2 | 4201 |

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EXAMINER

WALLERSON, MARK E

| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
|----------|--------------|
| 2626 | 11 |

DATE MAILED: 09/09/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 09/461,738 | Applicant(s) Motohashi et al | Examiner Mark Wallerson | Art Unit 2626 |  |
| | | | | | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-140 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-140 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some* c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). <u>7, 9, 1</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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Part III DETAILED ACTION

Notice to Applicant(s)

1. This application has been examined. Claims 1-140 are pending.

Priority

2. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Information Disclosure Statement

3. The references listed in the Information Disclosure Statements dated 12/16/99; 4/24/02; 11/21/02; 1/14/03, and 3/26/03 have been considered by the Examiner and is attached to this Office Action.

Claim Objections

4. Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities:
“Apparatus” in line 3 of the claim should be deleted. Appropriate correction is required.
5. Claim 140 is objected to because of the following informalities:
“Salve” should be changed to “slave”. Appropriate correction is required.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claim 119 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

“[M]ore than a specified” in lines 10 and 11 of claim 116 is unclear.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

8. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371© of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35

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U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

9. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, and 103 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kitamura et al (Kitamura) (U. S. 6,400,463).

With respect to claims 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 56, 58, 60, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 74, 76, 77, 79, 81, 83, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, and 102, Kitamura discloses an image formation apparatus (1001) connected to at least one other image formation apparatus (1002) such that data communications can be executed between the two image formation apparatuses (column 19, lines 31-60), the image formation apparatus (1001) comprising a reading unit (reader) which reads an image of a document (column 6, lines 10-15); a printing unit which prints the read image (column 5, lines 55-61); a controller (101) which executes a link copy mode (which reads on a mode to transmit the read image to the other stations) (column 7, lines 50-60) in which the read image is transferred to the other image forming apparatus for sharing the printing of the read image with the local and other image forming apparatus (column 7, lines 50-60), wherein the operations in the link mode are inhibited when the link copy mode and a function not executable in the other image forming

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apparatus is selected (which reads on not printing the image on a station if that station cannot output the image) (column 20, lines 53 to column 21, line 5).

Additionally, Kitamura discloses a communication unit which notifies the other image forming apparatus of functions available in the local image forming apparatus (column 21, lines 11-30), and a document read by the other image forming apparatus is printed by the local image forming apparatus (column 21, lines 6-10).

Still additionally, Kitamura discloses a master/slave connection (column 5, lines 22-37), wherein the slave machine reports the functions available in the slave machine to the master machine (column 5, lines 22-37), and the master machine inhibits the operation in the link copy mode when the slave machine is not in data communications executable state (figure 6).

Still additionally, Kitamura discloses that when the link copy mode is selected, the non-executable function is not displayed (3, figure 6).

Still additionally, Kitamura discloses operations in the link copy mode are inhibited when the power of the other image forming apparatus is off or there is a printer error (which reads on a lamp failure) (column 20, line 60 to column 21, line 5).

Still additionally, Kitamura discloses that an image of a document read by and transferred from the other image forming apparatus is printed in the local image forming apparatus (column 7, lines 50-60).

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Still additionally, Kitamura discloses the link copy mode is inhibited when the other image formation apparatus is in the supply end state (which reads on whether or not paper sheets are supplied) (column 5, lines 22-37).

Still additionally, Kitamura discloses that operations in the link copy mode are inhibited (interruptions are prevented) when the other image forming apparatus is printing an image (column 20, lines 43-59).

Still additionally, Kitamura discloses the local (master) machine inhibits the link copy mode when the other (slave) machine displays a screen other than the normal copy screen (column 20, lines 43-65).

With regard to claims 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 55, 57, 59, 61, 64, 66, 68, 71, 73, 75, 78, 80, 82, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, and 103, Kitamura discloses the image forming apparatus is connected to the other image forming apparatus peer to peer (which reads on master to slave) (figure 1).

With respect to claims 39 and 54, Kitamura discloses the slave machine periodically transmits a connection signal to the master machine and the master machine receives the signal and determines whether the slave machine is ready for communication (column 5, lines 22-37).

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

11. Claims 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116 (as best

understood), 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132,

133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, and 139 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated

by Kayano et al (Kayano) (U. S. 5,812,747).

With respect to claims 104, 108, 112, 116, 120, 123, 127, 131, 135, 137, and 139, Kayano discloses an image formation apparatus (1) connected to at least one other image formation apparatus (2 and 3) such that data communications can be executed between the two image formation apparatuses (column 5, lines 17-30), the image formation apparatus (1) comprising a reading unit which reads an image of a document (column 6, lines 41-60); a printing unit which prints the read image (column 6, lines 30-32); a controller (27) which executes a link copy mode (interconnected mode) in which the read image is transferred to the other image forming apparatus for sharing the printing of the read image with the local and other image forming apparatus (the abstract, lines 1-3 and column 7, line 50 to column 8, line 48), wherein the link copy mode (interconnected mode) is automatically executed when the number of copies to be printed is more than a specified number (column 14, lines 38-63 and column 7, line 50 to column 8, line 10).

With respect to claims 105, 109, 113, 117, 121, 124, 128, and 132, Kayano discloses displaying a message indicating execution of the link copy mode (column 5, line 58 to column 6, line 4).

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With respect to claim 106, 110, 114, 118, 122, 125, 129, and 133, Kayano discloses the link copy mode is canceled after printing is completed (column 9, lines 25-42).

With regard to claim 107, 111, 115, 119, 126, 130, 134, 136, 138, and 140, Kayano discloses the image forming apparatus is connected to the other image forming apparatus peer to peer (which reads on master to slave) (figure 4).

Additionally, Kayano discloses a master/slave connection (column 7, lines 13-25).

Still additionally, Kayano discloses sending a request to shift to link copy mode to the other image forming apparatuses when the link copy mode is selected, and setting the link copy mode based on the response to the request for shift to link copy mode (column 7, line 50 to column 8, line 22).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

12. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

13. Claims 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, and 26, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitamura in view of Nakai et al (Nakai) (U. S. 6,081,342).

With respect to claims 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, and 26. Kitamura differs from claims 2, 5 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, and 26 in that he does not clearly disclose the function includes stapling.

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Nakai discloses an image forming system wherein plural image forming apparatuses transmit image data to each other and the functions of the image forming apparatus includes stapling (figure 8(b)). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified Kitamura wherein the function includes stapling. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified Kitamura by the teaching of Nakai in order to improve the efficiency of the system.

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark Wallerson whose telephone number is (703) 305-8581.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-4700.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, DC 20231

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9314 (for formal communications intended for entry)

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(for informal or draft communications, such as proposed amendments to be discussed at an interview; please label such communications "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT")

or hand-carried to:

Crystal Park Two

2121 Crystal Drive

Arlington, VA.

Sixth Floor (Receptionist)


MARK WALLERSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER
MARK WALLERSON